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## FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

IN CHARGE OF

LAVINIA L. DOCK, R.N.

### THE SAN FRANCISCO MEETING

As this JOURNAL appears the meeting at San Francisco will be coming to a close. In spite of the terrible war clouds that hang over all, international bonds have not been entirely obscured. England sent two delegates, Miss Hulme and Miss Kent, who came in time to see a little of the country; Australia sent a fraternal delegate, Miss E. L. Hunter, now resident in California, and we think some American members represented India. From Holland came a letter of courage, greeting, and hope. From Dr. Hamilton, in Bordeaux, a quiet note saying she was "too busy to come." From Sweden came, with greetings and regrets, sad news of the death of Sister Emmy Lindhagen, president of the Nurses' Association, who was with us in Cologne, and of the prolonged illness of Miss Tamm, who brought the first delegation from Sweden to our London Congress. From Germany and Finland we have heard nothing. Mrs. Fenwick has been expecting her only son to go to war; perhaps by this time he has gone.

### ABOUT THE WAR

We have been asked why we do not record events happening in connection with the European war. Books are being written; an English nurse, Miss Violet Thurstan, has written one—very well too—and it is published by Putnam's. So it may be time for us to remark that the Foreign Department, at any rate, intends to boycott this particular war. The only mention it will draw from us will be denunciation of "War" as a specimen of man's stupidity. This war will get no advertising, no "write-ups" from the secretary of the International Council. It is a colossal piece of atavism—of return to the age of the tiger and the ape—and though one or another country may be most conspicuous in aggression and attack, yet all the Great Powers, our own not excluded, share the guilt of maintaining the system and moving along lines which everybody knows must and will lead to war.

In monopolistic control of land and the earth treasures within—in race hatred and jealousy—in fierce, lawless and greedy rivalry for trade; in the promulgated belief that one nation can only live and grow

by destroying, by exterminating another, in all these things, what great nation has a clean record? Which one can say "I am holier than thou?" Can we say it, who exterminated the Indians? Therefore in this column there will be no lines that sound like criticism of this or that nation; no condemnation or disapproval of this or that act. Each one can be matched somewhere else or at some other time. What we condemn is the frightful mismanagement of this fair world; the enormous stupidity of the destruction of life; the pretense that organized, legalized war can be legitimate, that it can have rules, that it must have a place among institutions. It should be recognized as highway robbery and murder on a vast scale, and if we had, in our midst, organized hordes of highway robbers and cutthroats, nurses might indeed follow in their wake to help rescue the wounded and dying, but if they began to take these bands at their own estimate, share in their feelings and applaud their rivalries, then would be the dangerous psychological moment, for it is this ultimate approbation that keeps war alive and feeds it with sentimentalism and covers it with a mantle that obscures its real ghastliness.

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Air is bad, when it is overheated, when it contains an excess of moisture, and when it is chemically contaminated. This is the conclusion of the New York State Commission on Ventilation, as summarized by Prof. C. E. A. Winslow, chairman, in the official organ of the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, the *Journal of the Outdoor Life*.

Professor Winslow shows that while it has been a matter of common belief for a long time that stagnant air was bad for the body, until recently no one knew why this was so. The New York State Commission on Ventilation has definitely proven two counts against bad air, one of them for the first time in history, and will probably prove others later on.

The first indictment against bad air shows that an increase in temperature beyond the normal seventy degrees produces serious derangement of the vaso-motor mechanism of the body, resulting in a rise of temperature, increased pulse, and a lowered blood pressure, with a corresponding decrease in efficiency, both physical and mental. In addition to this, overheating conduces to an undesirable congestion of the mucous membranes of the nose, thus, possibly paving the way for colds, sore throats, and attacks of various germ diseases.